



Senate Approves Job-Sustaining Transportation Infrastructure Investment to Advance Economic Recovery

(Columbus) - The Ohio Senate took decisive action today to advance the state's economic recovery through a plan to invest in its job-sustaining transportation system.

Senators gave bipartisan approval to a two-year budget that sustains critical infrastructure needs, reduces overhead costs, streamlines the construction process and creates an innovative new approach to project investment through public-private partnerships.

"Our economic recovery depends on the strength of our transportation infrastructure," said Senate President Tom Niehaus. "We're at the epicenter of the nation's commerce system, and we simply can't sustain job creation in this state if we can't move people and products. This is a fiscally prudent budget that supports our current critical needs, bans earmarks, demands efficiency and promotes collaboration to generate new sources of project revenue."

The transportation budget allows Governor John Kasich's administration to pursue a new approach to transportation funding through Public-Private Partnerships (otherwise known as PPPs or P3s). These partnerships allow state government to contract with a private company to manage an infrastructure project, while keeping the public sector accountable for its progress and oversight. These agreements, which leverage private sector resources, often reduce upfront public costs. In exchange, the private investment is paid back through a public source of revenue, such as tolls. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, 29 states and Puerto Rico have created a legislative framework for transportation PPPs, and more than \$46 billion has been invested in these projects over the last 20 years.

Among other examples of public-private partnership opportunities created in the budget, the Ohio Department of Transportation would be allowed to generate new revenue through sponsorship of "Brown Signs," used to direct the traveling public to a historical location or site of interest. The program is expected to generate \$1 million annually.

"The transportation budget is arguably the biggest jobs bill that moves through the legislative process," said State Senator Tom Patton (R- Strongsville), chair of the Senate Highways and Transportation Committee. "I'm especially proud of the bipartisan support we've been able to achieve on this plan. It's an example of what we can accomplish together when we put partisanship aside for the good of Ohio."

State Senator Frank LaRose (R-Akron), vice chair of the transportation committee, added, "If we want to get Ohioans back to work, we have to provide a reliable infrastructure for them to get there and for our businesses to move their products. We have the fourth largest interstate system in the nation, the third-largest number of active rail lines and more bridges than 49 other states. That network requires constant maintenance and improvement. The budget we've designed allows us to support the system we have while creating opportunities for future investment. Most importantly, this is a responsible plan that advances our number-one priority: sustaining and creating jobs."

The transportation budget now moves back to the Ohio House for concurrence.

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